

**Veterans Services Foundation Board Retreat**  
**Department of Veterans Services**  
**April 13, 2006**

**Summary of Accomplishments**

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Members of the Board of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) met on April 13, 2006 to discuss and prioritize Foundation goals and strategies. Representatives from the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) and the Joint Leadership Council (JLC) were invited to attend and participate. Topics discussed included:

- Past Foundation accomplishments
- Analysis of current activities and potential opportunities
- Foundation goals
- Action strategies

**FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS**

**Accomplishments**

- Located existing funds and created a consolidated account
- Determined how the Foundation fits into the new organization
- Increased visibility of veterans issues
- Participated in the opening of the Suffolk cemetery to show support
- John and Lydia provided expertise and leadership for the Foundation
- Drafted Foundation bylaws, policies and procedures
- Aligned Foundation activities with the DVS Commissioner to determine use of Foundation funds
- Centralized funds with limited opposition
- Provided funding for McGuire walking trail and the coordinated effort reduced costs
- Supported staff training

**Factors contributing to success**

- Strong leadership for the Foundation
- Reorganization of DVS was allowed to happen with little interference by the General Assembly and veterans organizations
- Governor Warner provided leadership, helping to pass new legislation with strong support
- State audit revealed need for additional financial oversight
- Strong staff support was provided to the Foundation and partnership formed with DVS, the Attorney General's office and other organizations
- The Foundation evolved as an organization with growing recognition by others
- Good trust among partners
- Clear fiduciary responsibility for the Foundation

## **FOUNDATION GOALS**

1. Enhance the quality of life for all veterans in Virginia
2. Increase public recognition of role played by those returning from combat who will be future veterans
3. Develop programs that supplement and complement other veteran's efforts
4. Provide a dedicated reliable funding stream for veteran's programs

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Things we should do less of because they block achievement of our goals:**

- Talking about it!
- Getting emerged in minutiae at meetings
- Making things too complicated (use the KISS approach)
- Losing time when VSF meets

### **Things we should do more of because they are helping us achieve our goals:**

- Collaborative efforts between VSF, BVS, and JLC
- Clarifying roles, setting measurable goals and determining responsibilities of VSF
- Providing administrative oversight of available funds
- Sharing regular financial reports from VSF from DVS
- Retaining support from the Governor's cabinet
- Building and maintaining support from national organizations like Veterans Affairs, veteran service organizations and others
- Increasing recognition that VSF is the funding arm of DVS that supplements General Assembly funding

### **Things we should consider starting to do to help us achieve our goals:**

- Increasing awareness and name recognition – prepare a communications plan to educate donors about who we are so they are more willing to contribute funds
- Exploring new fundraising avenues
  - general funds
  - corporate funds
  - private funds
- Looking into various kinds of contributions
- Identifying a consistent goal or program to help establish a continuous line item in the state budget for DVS to create a reliable funding stream
- Dedicating DVS support staff for increased visibility efforts
- Seeking additional federal funding and program support
- Identifying corporations who troops work for and recognizing corporations who are veteran friendly
- Identifying and targeting Virginia vendors and contractors who profit from defense money

## **PRIORITIZED ACTION STRATEGIES**

1. Conduct a needs assessment and prioritize
2. Identify potential financial donors
3. Create a dedicated, reliable public funding stream
4. Define and measure success
5. Finalize and adopt VSF policies and procedures
6. Define specific ongoing programs for veterans
7. Foster internal working relationships across DVS boards and staff
8. Identify VSF staff support needs to carryout activities
9. Develop an outreach and public relations plan

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Identify working committees to prepare specific plans of action for priority strategies (JLC, DVS, Board, VSF at next regularly scheduled meetings)
- Conduct a needs assessment and identify service gaps with a list of specific prioritized funding needs and amounts by the end of July
- Compile a list of potential donors or corporations with links to veterans

## VSF Prioritized Strategies

Conduct Needs Assessment and Prioritize	Identify Potential Donors	Create a Public Funding Stream	Define Success	Finalize and Adopt Policies and Procedures	Define Specific Programs for Veterans	Foster Internal Relationships	Identify Staff Support Needs	Develop an Outreach and PR Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define particular programs for veterans (see what BVS and JLC think needs are)</li> <li>▪ Provide coordinated priority list of gaps</li> <li>▪ Select programs to be supported and identify fund targets</li> <li>▪ Develop case statement of need</li> <li>▪ Financial gap review of all DVS initiatives (care center, BEN, CEM)</li> <li>▪ Identify and meet needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate recognition program</li> <li>▪ Enlarge ranks of veteran friendly companies via recognition programs</li> <li>▪ Identify corporations and make contact for fundraising</li> <li>▪ Gifts (corporate, individual)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislative check off revenue</li> <li>▪ Advocate on Capital Hill for federal funding (send Vince)</li> <li>▪ Identify new money from General Assembly</li> <li>▪ Secure funding stream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide discrete measures to assess progress and outcomes</li> <li>▪ Go, do...then measure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legal review of Virginia codes and regulations</li> <li>▪ Adopt draft policies and procedures for Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scholarships and grants</li> <li>▪ Veterans houses fund raising</li> <li>▪ Veterans and active duty family centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with JLC to solicit support for VSF activities</li> <li>▪ Bi-annual meeting of all three veterans boards</li> <li>▪ Coordinate operational plan with DVS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff support for VSF and JLC</li> <li>▪ Dedicated staff resource to foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Website development, utilization</li> <li>▪ Vision and mission statements</li> <li>▪ Each foundation member visits a different facility (orientation, needs analysis)</li> <li>▪ Adopt logo (Virginia is for Veterans)</li> <li>▪ Educate public re: military, veterans</li> <li>▪ Identify veterans for outreach</li> <li>▪ Develop marketing proposal for VSF with Virginia Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>▪ Veteran's annual conference</li> </ul>